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AFTER A CENTURY IN CHINA

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AFTER A CENTURY IN CHINA



IN September, 1807, the first Protestant missionary in China, Robert Morrison, landed at Macao. In 1836, Rev. J. L. Shuck, the first American Baptist missionary, arrived at the same port. When he and his wife reached China they were taken from the vessel in which they had sailed to another nearer shore and landed secretly. In those days and until within very recent years China was hostile to all foreigners. A hundred years ago there were no missionaries; now there are 3,700. Then there was not a single convert; after seven years of labor one convert was won, and a few years later some others. About this time Dr. Milne said, "It may be that God will bless this work, and at the end of a hundred years we may hope to have even so many as a thousand converts." That was an utterance of sublime faith; but God has so marvelously prospered the work that instead of 1,000 there are now

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191,000 converts. For many long years missionaries were confined to the coast; but, beginning with 1860, they began to go into the interior, and now they are to be found in every province of that great empire. There are now 4,760 places from which go forth light and heat and power, as from so many dynamos.

EYE WITNESSES IN CHINA

During the year 1907, upon the urgent invitation of our missionaries in China, a deputation was sent to that empire to examine, as friendly visitors, the work that American Baptists were doing there and to observe the reported changes in conditions. Through the practical and energetic backing of some Baptist laymen, about a score of American Baptists, in several parties, made a careful study of the work on the field. The expenses of the party were borne privately. Writing from Shanghai, the deputation report: "We are profoundly impressed with the loyalty and genuine consecration of our missionaries. . . . They are proving themselves worthy in the highest degree of the confidence of all Christians. We wish, also, to record our appreciation of the faithful work of the Missionary Union in the face of such conditions as have seldom, if ever, been encountered hitherto by missionary boards on foreign fields." They then praise "the patience and confidence and devotion" of our Executive Com-

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mittee and officers, and end their report by an appeal to American Baptists to add to their usual gifts \$500,000 for providing adequate equipment for our missions in the Far East.

IN PRAISE OF THE MISSIONARIES

Two American ministers to China, who have had intimate knowledge of mission work during the last twenty years, have borne magnificent testimony to the splendid achievements of the missionaries. Neither of these was connected in any way with any missionary society, and indeed neither was a member of a Christian church. Neither Colonel Denby nor Mr. Conger could by any possibility have written more enthusiastically than they did. I have their testimony in their own handwriting. Beside these may be placed the testimony of Viceroy Tuan Fang, who says, speaking for the Chinese Government: "We take pleasure in bearing testimony to the part taken by American missionaries in promoting the progress of the Chinese people. They have borne the light of Western civilization into every nook and corner of the empire. The awakening of China, which now seems to be at hand, may be traced in no small measure to the hands of the missionaries. And for their service you will find China not ungrateful." In my own journey through China I was repeatedly assured by business men and by men connected with the diplomatic service, that the missionaries

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of today, and especially the American missionaries, are doing an amazing amount of good for the people, physically and mentally as well as religiously.

THE EDICTS

The empress dowager of China has veered around completely from the position she took just before the Boxer uprising. Edict after edict is coming from her palace looking towards great reforms. The plan for abolishing the opium traffic within ten years; for putting an end to the cruel custom of footbinding; the establishment of a constitutional form of government somewhat like that of Japan; the recognition of Sunday as a holiday in the government offices and schools; and above all, the decree that Chinese officials shall hereafter be selected from those who have passed examinations in the Western learning, with the giving up of the old-time examinations in the Chinese classics,—all these things show that China is awake. Sir Robert Hart, the foremost foreigner in all China, says that during the first forty-five years of his stay in that empire, China was like a closed room; but that within the last five or six years the doors and windows have been thrown wide open and the breezes of Western suggestions have been freely sweeping in. Sir Robert Hart assured me that he believed China was awake, not to fall asleep again.

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CHINA'S RELIGIOUS NEED

There is abundant material for those who desire to learn about the three great religions of China, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, as well as about ancestor worship and that queer but powerful superstition *fung shui*. Here, however, we are concerned with more intimate problems. Our missionaries assure us that the problem in China is the same as that in the United States, the protest of the sinful heart against yielding to the summons of a holy God. But that problem is intensified by the heathen religions and is made immensely greater by the fact that the population of China is so tremendous. Four hundred million souls needing salvation by Christ! Here in the United States there are 55,000,000 needing conversion and some 21,000,000, including foreigners, negroes, and people in the far West, who need evangelizing.

MOVEMENTS TOWARD COOPERATION

Face to face with overwhelming difficulties and a gigantic task, the missionaries are not concerning themselves about some of the smaller problems that enter into ecclesiastical life. They are aiming to do their work most wisely and rapidly. There is a movement of federation between denominations that are akin to each other in beliefs and practises, and a movement looking to union of effort wherever that is

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possible without the sacrifice of denominational convictions. The spirit of comity is abroad in China; indeed, one may say comity is rarely violated in that field. Baptists, north and south, are cooperating in publishing the Bible and books helpful to its understanding, as well as in the training of theological students.

AMERICAN BAPTISTS IN CHINA

The first Baptist Christian was baptized in Macao in 1837, the year after the arrival of Mr. Shuck. The work was transferred from Macao to Hongkong in 1842, and in 1860 to Swatow. Rev. William Ashmore, D.D., and Rev. J. W. Johnson, who had been working for the Chinese in Bangkok from 1850, were our first missionaries to settle there. In 1843 Dr. Macgowan began work in Ningpo. Dr. Lord followed in 1847 and Dr. Goddard in 1849. Dr. Goddard's son and grandson are at present (1907) engaged in the work in China. In 1889 we began work in West China, and in 1893 at Hanyang in Central China. The full story of our work in these four centers, known as the South China Mission, the East China Mission, the West China Mission, the Central China Mission, is told in the pamphlet "Missions in China" issued by the Missionary Union. According to our last report, we had in China 42 ordained missionaries, 7 unordained missionaries, chiefly physicians, 45 wives of missionaries,

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every one of whom is engaged in missionary work, 19 single women, of whom 6 are physicians, — a total of 113 missionaries. We have 305 native workers, with 5,115 members of mission churches, of whom 442 were added the preceding year. In 1906 we spent upon our missions in China \$128,440. Other parts of our great field received somewhat larger sums proportionately, and the suggestion that more workers and more money shall be put into China does not mean diminution of the gifts for other sections, which would mean retrenchment of the work there, but rather an increase in our gifts so as to make possible the enlargement of our work demanded in China.

THE NEED FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

While not abating in the least their zeal for evangelistic work, our missionaries in China are very eagerly desirous of adding to the equipment that which is absolutely needed to meet the demands for Christian education. All China is in an educational ferment. There is an indescribable enthusiasm manifest among the younger Chinese for an education. The Chinese Government finds itself absolutely unequipped, and if it had all facilities, the education that it would impart would be very strongly antagonistic to Christian ideas. The ideal which the missionaries hold before them is to have day schools in connection

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with each single station, high schools in the central stations, and two or three colleges and three theological seminaries. These are urgent necessities. The hunger and thirst of the Chinese to be taught and the importance that our Christians do a large part toward evangelizing their own countrymen unite in appealing to us for special help at this critical period.

Never in the world's history has a nation so rapidly emerged from the darkness toward the light. Never has there been an opportunity afforded Christians like that given us at present in China for influencing a people while in a receptive condition. And never has the cry, "Come over and help us", sounded so forceful in the ears of any Christians as does this from China. Never was there a country where young men could so invest their abilities and so use their talents to advantage. Never was there a country where money invested for the Kingdom would bring such splendid returns. Americans seem to possess the especial good-will of the Chinese, and American Baptists in the years that are gone have so nobly lived and so wisely planned their work that we are now prepared to erect on the foundations already laid a splendid superstructure for the honor of Jesus Christ in the advance work for the salvation of China. Shall we improve our opportunity and make the advance?

